Why Discouraged?

Discouraged! why?
Doth love e'er die?
Doth God forget His own?
The sparrow's cry
Doth reach the sky;
Is thine the less upborne?

Discouraged! nay,
When God's great Yea
And Amen seals His love,
Each blessed day
Hope lights the way
To rest and joy above.—Sel.

"What May we Expect of Efficient Sabbath School Work."

Read at the Pennsylvania State Sabbath School Convention, by Eld. J. H. Knepper.

The mighty host of millions who are today, with a steady tread, all over this Christian land of ours, marching to the music of the Sabbath School, may be almost literally described in the language of revalation. "After this I beheld and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongues, crying with a loud voice saying, salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" It is an unquestionable declaration that a large proportion of the persons who are to compose the membership of the church in the future are now enrolled upon the records of the Sabbath School. As there is a sense in which the child is the father of the man so in like manner there is a sense in which the Sabbath School is the parent of the church, and as what the man now is, results largely from what the child was, so what the church in the future will be depends greatly upon what the Sabbath School is. For the Sabbath School of today will determine very largely the theology of the church of the future. It will mould its views of the inspiration and authority of the Bible as the infallible Word of God. If then the idea is efficiently taught, and soundly emphasized in the Sabbath School that the Bible is a divinely inspired book, so that upon all matters involved in it, there is and can be no appeal to any higner authority, then may we expect to see in the church of the future large reverence for the Bible and willing submission to its authority. And there will be in the church that vigor of action and strength of character which comes of a consciousness of being infallibly right. If however on the contrary there is through inefficient Sabbath School work inculcated upon the plastic minds of the Sabbath School populace the idea that as a matter of fact, our final appeal is human reason, and that by the light of reason we are to call the Scriptures giving authority to so much of it as suits us, and quietly rejecting what does not suit us, or if not going quite so far as to reject what does not suit us, pass it by in silence, then the church of the future will be flabby and latitudinarian. The superstructure will be weak and insecure because the foundation is defective. If upon Bible truths loose ideas are taught now, then the coming church will be full of loose ideas. If no ideas are definitely and efficiently communicated now, then the church of the future will have no definite ideas, but wild notions and strange freaks will take the place of healthy and vigorous opinions and a mass of cloudy sentiments will be a flimsy substitude for definite Christian doctrine. If on the other hand we make our Sabbath Schools through our efficiency actual divinity schools in which Bible doctrines are taught in a way at once simple, plain, definite and authoritive, then whatever else the church of the future may be, it will be sound in theology. In a similar way the Sabbath School of the present will give moral tone to the church of the future. And I do not mean simply that the Sabbath School is to determine the conscience of the church as to the larger and coarser questions in morals No a certain amount of instruction upon such questions is in the air about us. We cannot live without learning it. But the ideal conscience is delicate, sensitive, as tender as a flower upon which you dare hardly breathe least you discolor it. Every civilized man knows it is wrong to tell a lie, but not every conscience reproves one for some subtile shrewd deception. Many a man will stab his neighbor over and over again with flings and insinuations, who would not stab him once with a dagger of steel. Many a man would turn away in horror from a gambler's den, will still deal in options, corners, etc., and not raise a question as to whether his gains are ill-gotten or not. Sometimes to the success of a questionable method or operation silences all inquiry as to its morality. Hence the necessity of efficient instruction to assist in distingushing between the larger and coarser questions in morals, and those which require a conscience delicately sensitive. There are moral problems to which the most benighted heathen could hardly fail to give a correct answer. There are others which require a conscience that is heaven illuminated and moulded by efficient culture. Now it must be clear to all that as the Sabbath School has it in its power to fix the theology of the church of the future, so it has very large power over the conscience of that church. In other words, the question is now being determined in the work of the Sabbath School whether the conscience of the future church or church members shall be common, coarse, secular, or whether it shall be delicate, discriminating, piercing and commanding. On this subject like on many others we have to judge the future by the past. Take out of the church today (I speak now particularly of the Brethren church and as far as my own observation goes) all those members who have been enrolled in the Sabbath School, and all those who are warm friends and substantial supporters of the Sabbath School and what have we left? I answer, pew ornaments good for an hour once every two, three or four weeks as the case may be, narrow minded, chronic grumblers, callous hearted, penurious, greatly to be pitied mortals. There are exceptions to this rule as to many others but they are like angel's visits "few and far between." On the other hand take that church member that is regularly found in the prayer meeting, social and teachers meetings, in the society for Christian Endeavor, in the general church work in all its various branches, zealous, active, earnest, warm hearted, liberal, charitable, always ready for duty, and you will find upon investigation that he or she as the case may be is in sympathy with the Sabbath School and its work in the full sense of the term.

What may we then expect from efficient Sabbath School work? We answer:

Orthodox theology in the church. Willing submission and obedience to all Bible commandments. A delicate and discriminating conscience as to right or wrong. And a church membership as will be well pleasing to the Great Shepherd and Bishop of the Soul.

The Perils Attending the Performance of Duty.

SERMON SKELETON.

So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the Land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. Deut. 34:5.

Who so fit may we ask, to lead the children of Israel into Canaan as he who had, for their sakes, defied the wrath of Pharoah; who led them out of Egypt, and shared with them the wanderings of the wilderness, endured their perversity and often interceded on their behalf to God. There is nothing more sublime in the history of Moses than the story of his death. Tried by a worldly standard, it seems a poor and shameful ending of such a life. To me it seems that the man Moses with eye undimmed and natural force unabated, resigning to another the office he was still fit to bear, quietly accepting the affair which took his leadership from him, he was surrounded with a purer luster than ever before had rested upon him. The ascent of Nebo was more glorious than the decent of Sinai.

Great pains are taken to show why Moses was not allowed to enter Canaan. It was not because age disabled him, or because of his sin at the waters of Meribiah. The story of this sin is recorded in Numbers 20. After thirty eight years the tribes entered the wilderness of Zin, and finding no water they murmured bitterly and loudly. Moses and Aaron went from the people to the door of the tabernacle and were on their faces before the Lord, Moses was commanded to take the rod the symbol of God's presence and speak to the rock, which should give them water, but the patience of Moses was worn out, standing before the people he lifted up his hand to strike the rock twice. For this disobedience he was prevented from entering Canaan.

The perils of a call to service. There are perils in the performance of these duties. The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were on the face of the earth. Meekness was a great requisite, and see how in the instance of Moses, his meekness was often lacking.

There are perils belonging to the gifts of a high calling. And this calling even when consecrated to the good of others, is a perilous possession. Constant watching will lessen the peril.

To Paul, lest he should be exalted beyond measure at the abundance of Revelation, there was given him a "thorn in the flesh." God did not withdraw the power from the rod of Moses. The Lord does not punish the multitudes for the mistakes of their leaders.

There are perils incident to the fulfillment of a high calling. It is impossible at the beginning of an undertaking to warn one of the dangers that he would have to pass through. Even Jesus staggered at the foot of Calvary. Trials, when still in the future do not seem beyound our endurance. But when we meet the smallest trial unprepared, then we are weak. God has many resources for the accomplishment of his will. The Israelites marched into Canaan though Moses, he was commanded to go on Mount Pisgah and die. From this and many other instances we learn that the Lord has many leaders and a constant reserve force for the obedience of his will.

EDWARD MASON.

Bible Commands.

BY J. B. LAIR.

Allow me to ask, are there any other commands but Bible commands necessary unto salvation? If so, what are they, and by whom are they made?

I turn to my Bible and I find that faith is a prerequisite. Faith in God—"believing that he is, and that he is able to save," as per his own arrangement—which includes the ordinances as conditions of salvation and the hope established by obeying the commands. This faith or confidence in God and Christ naturally creates a repentance, or in other words, a desire for relation with Christ, and hence a hatred for sin. At this juncture the individual is ready and willing for anything pleasing to his Savior, and is baptized. Many Scriptures prove that the baptized is now in Christ, and hence in a saved state. But in order that the baptized may "grow in grace" and be exercised in the divine life, he is taught to stoop down and wash his brothers feet. This is one of the grandest lessons of humility that could be taught—grand, because it is the lesson of humility that Jesus himself taught. And if the gospel is a perfect arrangement, it is this one necessary lesson, sufficient in itself, because of the nature of its author. Who dare say it is not. Not only is it a grand lesson of humility, but it is a very forcible illustration of "love one for another" by which all men may know that "ye are are my disciples." Is it not plain that this answers the double purpose of showing humility and love. And now who can prove that "plain clothing" and "uniformity" need be tacked on as an additional demonstration of humility and love, as if Christ did not know what all was necessary. This certainly is evidence to the fact, that such persons do lack faith in Christ and the gospel. But to return to the subject. In order that man might properly realize his relation to his brother—the grand level upon which they are all placed, there is a supper introduced, at which all can eat, regardless of sex, color or previous condition.

This is the "Lord's table—all are his children—all alike, heirs to the great feast and blessing that he has in store for them that love and obey him. The virtue of this supper does not consist so much in the real fact of our eating it, as in the purpose or design we have in it. If the virtue were in the eating alone an unregenerated person could be benefited by eating it, even without thee,